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AUTHOR	Leonard, Jacqueline; Horvat, Erin McNamara; Riley-Tillman, T. Chris
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ABSTRACT

Attempts to achieve diversity in the faculty in institutions of higher education have increased in recent years. Despite these attempts, faculty of color and women are still underrepresented in the higher ranks. This paper presents autobiographies focusing on the career trajectories of three junior faculty members at one institution: a divorced black woman, a married white woman raising two small children, and a young married white male. These portraits are presented as a way of providing a view from the trenches on why gender and race/ethnicity disparities persist in the faculty ranks. In addition, some preliminary data are presented to contextualize the experiences of these three assistant professors. The paper concludes by calling for more attention to be directed toward retaining female faculty and faculty of color. These efforts should be directed at providing a supportive work environment that recognizes differences and contributions that diversity brings to institutions of higher education. An appendix contains the faculty diversity questionnaire with which background data were collected from a diverse sample of faculty respondents. (Contains 2 figures, 2 tables, and 21 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Achieving Diversity in Academia: A Dream Deferred?

Jacqueline Leonard, Ph.D.

Erin McNamara Horvat, Ph.D.

&

T. Chris Riley-Tillman, Ph.D.

Temple University

Please send all correspondence to:

Dr. Jacqueline Leonard

Temple University

Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

438 Ritter Hall

Philadelphia, PA 19122

jleonard@nimbus.temple.edu

(215) 204-8042 (office)

(215) 877-1211 (home)

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Drs. Leonard, Horvat and Riley-Tillman are assistant professors in the College of Education at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Leonard's area of focus is Mathematics Education, Dr. Horvat is in Urban Education, and Dr. Riley-Tillman is in School Psychology.

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Achieving Diversity in Academia: A Dream Deferred?

Abstract. Attempts to achieve diversity in the faculty in institutions of higher education have increased in recent years. Despite these attempts, faculty of color and women are still underrepresented in the higher ranks. This paper presents autobiographies focusing on the career trajectories of three junior faculty members at one institution: a divorced Black woman, a married White woman raising two small children, and a young married White male. We present these portraits as a way of providing a view from the trenches on why gender and race/ethnicity disparities persist in the faculty ranks. In addition, some preliminary data is presented to contextualize the experiences of these three assistant professors. The paper concludes by calling for more attention to be directed towards retaining female and faculty of color. These efforts should be directed at providing a supportive work environment that recognizes differences and contributions that diverse bring to institutions of higher education.

Achieving Diversity in Academia: A Dream Deferred?

What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Langston Hughes

Despite decades of attention to diversity in higher education, the faculty in most colleges and universities (excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and women's institutions) remains predominantly White and male. The lack of diversity among college faculty is an issue that warrants significant concern not only for institutions of higher education but for our society as well. It is often in college that students come in contact with and learn to accommodate individuals who are not like themselves. Green (1989) defines campus climate as embracing "the culture, habits decisions, practices and policies that make up campus life" (p. 113). Having a diverse faculty is critical to promoting a pluralistic campus climate in which cultural differences are embraced (Gregory, 2000; Horton, 2000).

In a recent analysis of racial climate at predominantly white universities, Horton (2000) addressed the racial divide in the United States and the role that higher education plays in addressing this issue. Quoting Neil L. Rudenstine, president of Harvard University, he notes that "progress lies in gradually narrowing real gaps that continue to exist among people of different races [and] bringing people together – at the very best, by educating them together" (Horton, 2000, p. 36). Boyer (1990) claims that on university campuses, a strong sense of community must begin in the classroom. When faculty emphasize issues of diversity in courses and actively promote interaction across racial and ethnic boundaries, students of color report higher GPAs and faculty report higher levels of satisfaction (Astin, 1993; Nettles, 1991).

However, despite the demonstrated benefits of growing and nurturing a diverse faculty, and despite recent advances, the faculty in institutions of higher education is still predominantly White and male. Possible causes for this lack of diversity in the faculty ranks have their roots in the educational pipeline and in the institutional practices of the recruitment, retention and promotion

for at institutions of higher education. In this paper we address how race/ethnicity and gender, two commonly cited marks of diversity, affected the career trajectories of three assistant professors.

Diversity in Academe: The Cases of Underrepresented Faculty

The number of Black faculty has been used as one measure of the diversity of college campuses. "African Americans comprise 12% of the U.S. population but only 4% of the post-secondary faculty, and an even smaller fraction in four-year colleges and those with predominantly white students" (Russell & Fairweather as cited in Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999, p. 115). While education has traditionally been viewed as a major path by which disadvantaged persons, including women and persons of color, may expand their educational opportunities, recent data show that the number of African American students in graduate school has remained unchanged (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999; Tierney, 1997). This lack of progress through the higher education pipeline has significant consequences for certain groups, impacting the composition of the faculty in higher education. Thus, the underrepresentation of women and faculty of color is commonplace in higher education.

Tierney (1997) argues that the admission rate for students of color and employment rates for diverse faculty in colleges and universities are inextricably linked. If an institution's student body is not diverse enough, the institution will have difficulty attracting diverse faculty. If professors of color are not visible in predominantly white institutions, then students of color are less likely to enroll (Gregory, 1998; Horton, 2000). However, as more graduate students of color are admitted to programs, the pool of potential faculty grows; this in turn potentially increases the number of faculty of color available to mentor students of color in the future (Tierney, 1997).

Similarly, pipeline issues have affected the presence of women in academe. Despite the fact that female students have higher retention rates, particularly in math and sciences courses when these courses are taught by women (Robst, Keil, & Russo, 1998), Brown and Woodbury

(1995) note that appointments to the assistant professor rank lag behind that of Ph.D. production for women. Moreover, women tend to be given temporary appointments or placed on a non-tenure track line (Brown & Woodbury, 1995; Chronister, Gansneder, Haper & Baldwin, 1997). Hensel (1991) found that women are underrepresented in the tenured ranks and suffer subtle gender discrimination in teaching, research, salary differentials and promotion.

In addition to these pipeline issues, barriers to increasing diversity exist in the recruitment, hiring, and promotional practices of many colleges and universities (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999). "Institutional discrimination asserts that the dominant status groups continue to maintain their privileged position in the workplace" (p. 118). Such privileges become part of organizational "norms," resulting in the silencing and marginalization of some and the acceptance and inclusion of others (Cohen, 1998). Research has shown that Black scholars are less likely to be found at heavily research-oriented institutions (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999). In addition, studies dealing with gender issues in the academy show women to be disadvantaged by male-dominated knowledge and belief structures (Cohen, 1998). However, little research has been conducted that examines the impact of institutional forces within academia on the racial and gender composition of the faculty (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999).

Common factors that impede the success of faculty of color in academia are large teaching loads and committee assignments that keep faculty from research, lack of mentoring relationships, lack of access to individuals who can provide guidance to obtain research dollars, and devaluation of teaching, community service, and peer reviewed articles (Gregory, 1998). Furthermore, student perceptions of faculty of color may negatively influence teaching evaluations, which are a critical part of the tenure process (McElroy, 1998). As a result of these barriers, Black scholars are less likely, compared to White scholars, to remain at heavily research-oriented institutions (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999). Further research addressing the experiences of diverse faculty at

predominantly white institutions is necessary if we are to learn more about the factors that inhibit or promote their success in academia.

Institutional culture and promotion practices also appear to have an adverse effect on the careers of women in academe. Women are more likely to report exclusion by colleagues, inappropriate sexual attention, demeaning or intimidating behaviors and unfair treatment in personnel matters than men (Bronstein & Farnsworth, 1998). Furthermore, the reward system in academe that is increasingly focused on research disadvantages women. Olsen and Maple (1993) found that while men placed more emphasis on research, women valued teaching and research.

In this paper we share our experiences as three assistant professors appointed to tenure-track positions at a Carnegie Classification Research-I institution. We are professors in the College of Education, which consists of 93 faculty. The College of Education faculty was 42% female, 58% male, and 2% Latino, 3% Asian, 6% African American, and 89% White during the 1999-2000 academic year. Diverse perspectives are particularly important when it comes to the retention of women and minority because it is more difficult for them to succeed in academia. By sharing our experiences and contextualizing these experiences with some preliminary data, we hope to put a human face on the dilemma of achieving diversity in the academy.

The concept for this paper emerged from a conversation that one Black faculty member (Jackie) had with two other faculty (Erin and Chris) during a diversity workshop held at a university's conference center in January 2000 to address issues of recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, concerns of students of color enrolled in the College of Education, and relationships with public schools serving the predominantly African American communities surrounding the university. After listening to several statements made at the workshop, Jackie wondered if the discussion represented a serious attempt to address diversity issues or merely lip service. After voicing her concerns to Erin and Chris, she decided to take a closer look at the

policies, procedures, and institutional culture with regard to faculty success, namely promotion and tenure. The following research questions were identified as a result:

(1) How do race, socioeconomic status, and gender impact the lives and careers of three, diverse tenure-track assistant professors?

(2) What are these assistant professors' perceptions of their treatment and support within the institution?

(3) How do the experiences of other professors compare with these three?

These questions developed as a result of reviewing the literature and examining the differences and commonalties that each of these bring to the academic table.

Theoretical Framework

Adult learning theorists have argued that individuals "construct their sense of the academic world based on their own personalities and life experiences" (Knowles as cited in Cohen, 1998, p. 355). Drawing on the work of Vygotsky (1978), Cohen (1998) argues that forming an identity and finding an authentic voice in an elite college environment are grounded in context, subjective experience, and personal perspective. Students in elite college or university environments often adopt complex strategies in order to cope with the foreign nature of academia (Cohen, 1998). For example, each of the junior faculty in this study attended very selective predominantly white undergraduate institutions. Jackie attended Boston University in the mid-seventies, Erin attended the University of Pennsylvania in the mid-eighties, and Chris attended Ithaca College in the early nineties. Each of these faculty developed specific coping strategies to deal with their unique situation as undergraduates on these campuses. Moreover, these strategies were useful in adapting to their current positions at a research institution.

"Affirmative action...has been one way to redress structural sexism and racism" (Tierney, 1997, p. 171). Affirmative action came about because campuses were White male centers of

learning (Tierney, 1997). In the past women and students of color were not allowed to fully participate in institutions of higher education and were shut out of careers and occupations that could change their status in life. Thus, gaining access to "public higher education has been seen as the central vehicle for increasing equity in society" (Tierney, 1997, p. 173). However, affirmative action has not fully delivered on its promises of increasing access to and equity in public education. The limited number of diverse faculty on white college campuses and the low graduation rate of students of color and female students in critical fields such as science and mathematics perpetuate the economic disparity among White men, persons of color, and women.

Methods and Data Sources

This paper utilizes a case study approach to describe the experiences of three diverse faculty members. To provide a larger context within which to interpret the three faculty narratives, a diversity survey was developed. The survey requested that participants to provide background information and rate some of their university experiences. Both tenured and non-tenured faculty members were included in the sample. The survey instrument may be found in Appendix A. The data were collected from January to November 2001 at three locations: 1) the Fifth Annual Holmes Partnership Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2) the College of Education and Human Resource at a southern university, and the College of Education at an eastern university. Thus, a diverse sample of respondents (urban, rural, and culturally diverse) was obtained to determine preliminary results.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this study. The primary data sources were written autobiographies and surveys, which were analyzed for common themes and patterns. The qualitative data consist of the narratives of Jackie, a Black, middle-class, divorced woman in her mid-forties, Erin, a White, middle-class, married woman in her mid-thirties, and Chris, a White, middle-class, married male in his late twenties. Their stories represent three

different perspectives of diversity and success in the academy as well as different experiences in obtaining access to higher education. Thus, three distinct cohorts are represented, all of whose perspectives add to the discussion of equity and diversity and how it shapes our thinking about race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities (Shapiro, Sewell, & DuCette, 1995). Quantitative data will show the results of a diversity survey that reveals how family of origin size, SES (family of origin), number of mentors, and years in the tenure process affect Blacks and females in comparison to Whites and males, respectively.

Results

Autobiographies

When Jackie, Erin, and Chris examined their autobiographies, they found that their educational trajectories were quite different. Jackie, currently in her fourth year of a tenure-track position in mathematics education, discovered that it took her 16 years after completing her bachelor's degree to accomplish her educational goals and begin a career teaching in higher education. Because she always believed that education was the key to success, she began her career path as an elementary teacher. Satisfied with her accomplishments, she did not pursue a graduate degree until she was a divorced single parent of two in 1987. Her desire to further her education was based on financial need and self-actualization. Thus, for Jackie, becoming an assistant professor was the result of a dream deferred.

Once her children completed high school, she felt free to relocate and accept a position in higher education. However, she had several negative experiences in the academy, most of which resulted from interactions with other faculty in her program area. One White female faculty member told Jackie that her course was popular because her standards were lower. Another White male faculty member refused to share materials that Jackie needed to teach the course at a satellite campus. Moreover, videotapes that Jackie needed to train pre-service teachers were not purchased

by the department as promised, thus forcing Jackie to purchase the tapes with her own money. With no mentors in her program, Jackie felt isolated and invisible. Jackie believes that racism and indifference are the reasons for the isolation she has experienced. Some may perceive her as an "Affirmative Action" hire and therefore less qualified. Learning to maneuver her way through the system is imperative to her success in the academy. Thus, mentoring or the lack thereof is crucial for her to learn the ropes in higher education.

Erin, now in her fifth year on the tenure track, is an assistant professor of urban education. Her educational trajectory placed her on the path to tenure within eight years of completing college. Erin obtained her doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles and found that her education had prepared her well for a position in academia. Despite being well prepared for her role in academia, Erin encountered significant setbacks on her road to tenure. While writing her dissertation Erin had her first child and thus started the tenure process with a ten-month old baby. In addition, Erin moved her family 3,000 miles across the country. Her husband had to leave his job and follow her to Philadelphia. With family financial pressure bearing down, Erin accepted a two-year appointment as Assistant Dean from the Dean of the College of Education; a position, which was accompanied with a significant raise in her salary, as it was a twelve-month position. While this decision eased the family financial pressures, it had a negative impact on Erin's ability to develop her skill as a college level instructor and devote time and energy to research and writing. During this two-year period, the tenure clock did not stop despite the fact that Erin carried a full administrative load and also taught two courses per year.

Gender issues such as childbearing and child rearing and administrative responsibilities had a great impact on Erin's career. After completing her two-year assignment as Assistant Dean, Erin assumed a regular faculty position in her department. During the first two years in a purely faculty role, Erin made good progress on her teaching and research responsibilities. However, in 2000

Erin had a second child, which resulted in a one semester maternity leave, adding another year to the tenure clock. Upon her return from that leave, Erin became the administrative coordinator for her program.

Unlike Jackie, Erin was fortunate enough to have supportive colleagues within her program as well as from other departments in the university. She also became well known in the College due to her tenure as Assistant Dean. However, administrative responsibilities and family pressures significantly affected Erin. As the mother of two young children she has found it difficult to carve out time to write and administrative responsibilities have compounded this problem. Interestingly, Erin was unable to locate a mentor who had gone through the tenure process while raising young children to advise her. Like many other institutions, the full professor ranks in the College of Education are filled with men and precious few women. Moreover, the women who have achieved that rank by and large do not have children or postponed child rearing until receiving tenure. Thus, while Erin is widely viewed as competent and has produced some well-recognized work, her progress has been slowed by family and administrative demands.

Chris' trajectory as a White male in the third year of a tenure-track appointment in school psychology has been phenomenal. At twenty-seven years of age, he graduated with a doctorate from Syracuse University. He had the financial means to focus exclusively on his education, and he was able to accomplish his goals at a rapid rate. Moreover, he had multiple role models and was mentored by both White men and women in the academy. While is it clear that Chris benefits from the guidance and direction of his peers and several mentors, he believes that societal expectations for success are higher for him than they are for others. Specifically, advantages such as mentoring and academic opportunities have the impact of limiting activities outside of the academic world, such as child rearing and family interaction. Thus, Chris believes that the academy rewards and oppresses him simultaneously.

Comparing Career Trajectories

While the trajectories of these three faculty members can be tracked and projected in several ways, plotting their careers over time along with specific benchmarks provides interesting data. Figure 1 shows the number of years it took for each individual to obtain his or her first tenure track faculty position. Figure 2 shows the remaining years of life expectancy for these individuals. As a result of these differences and the fact that retirement in academia is non-mandatory, Chris has 49 projected years of additional life expectancy and potential years of employment, Erin has 43 years, and Jackie has 27 projected years. While the difference between the individuals' ages is clear, the impact of these differences is hard to quantify. Chris' projected years has advantages such as a higher salary should he choose to remain in academia. Thus, the difference in additional years of life expectancy becomes much more important, impacting who remains in academia over the long run, retirement income, benefits, and general quality of life. While these data are interesting, it is important to note that this limited sample is likely to diverge in some manner from a more representative population.

Clearly Jackie and Erin's race/ethnicity and gender have affected their careers. The bearing and raising of children affected both Jackie and Erin's career trajectories. Jackie delayed her entry into academia while Erin's progress has been slowed. While the extra responsibilities borne by women in the domestic sphere are well documented (Hochschild, 1989) the implications of these extra duties for women in academic careers remain unexplored. These preliminary data suggest that more research inquiring into how faculty manage family and career warrants further investigation.

Race and ethnicity also played a significant role in Jackie, Erin and Chris' lives. While the absence of colleagues who share her race/ethnic background has appeared to hinder Jackie's progress, the reverse appears to be true for Chris who found White mentors willing to assist and

advise him. More importantly, however, is the degree to which Jackie felt invisible in the College, while Chris and Erin have experienced a feeling of more or less "fitting in." Furthermore, Chris and Erin have a longer life expectancy than Jackie does. Institutionalized discrimination and racism are manifested by significant gaps in the income, education, and health of African American and Whites (Banks, 2000). Again, the results presented here raise more questions than they answer. However, it is clear from these autobiographies that if we hope to retain and promote faculty of color more effort needs to be directed towards supporting these junior faculty and creating climates where they can feel valued and be successful.

Contextualizing the Autobiographies: The Diversity Survey

All of the variables on the survey were analyzed for statistical significance. The results of the diversity survey show differences among respondents when race and gender are controlled. Table 1 shows the results of the initial analysis by race, and Table 2 shows the same results by gender. Four of the 15 items on the survey are shown in Tables 1 and 2: 1) Family of Origin Size, 2) Family of Origin SES, 3) Number of Mentors, and 4) Time from BA to Ed.D or Ph.D. Respondent's family of origin size was rated (1) 2-4, (2) 5-6, (3) 6-8, (4) 9-10 or (5) 11 or more. SES (family of origin) was rated (1) low, (2) low-average, (3) average, (4) average-high, or (5) high. The number of mentors was rated (1) 0-1, (2) 2-3, (3) 4-5, (4) 6-7, or (5) 8 or more, and the time from BA to doctorate was rated (1) 0-2 years, (2) 3-5 years, (3) 6-8 years, (4) 9-10 years, or (5) 11 or more years. Among these variables, the time from BA to doctorate was the only significantly different variable controlling for gender. The results of this sample show that it takes women significantly longer than men to obtain terminal degrees ($\underline{F} = 5.236$, $p < .05$). If an additional variable such as marital status had been included, the results may have shown a difference between married and single women.

While not significantly different, other data shown in the aforementioned tables are interesting. In this sample, family of origin size, SES and the number of mentors are similar for men and women. Family of origin size and SES are also similar for Blacks and Whites. This implies that the opportunities for disadvantaged Blacks and Whites were about the same in this sample. In other words, Blacks and White came from similar SES backgrounds. While interesting to note but not significantly different, Blacks in this sample obtained terminal degrees at a slightly faster rate than Whites. However, most of the Blacks in the sample were relatively younger than Whites in the sample. A broader survey is needed to determine if this is a trend or a fluke. Finally, the number of mentors for Whites and Blacks, while not significant, indicates a possible trend that White faculty have more mentors than Black faculty. This trend cannot be ignored, because mentoring is important to retaining Black faculty in academia and to ensuring that new Black faculty are encouraged to enter the pipeline. Clearly, further analysis and refinement of the survey questions are needed to expand on these data and triangulate the results.

Discussion

Learning about power, privilege, and patriarchy empowered Jackie, Erin, and Chris to make critical decisions about their role in educating others about diversity in the academy. From the viewpoints of these faculty members, it appears that the their own institution is attempting to attend to issues of diversity. The number of women faculty has increased, and the percent of Black faculty is at or above the national average. However, the academy at large and our own institution in particular do not seem to reward all individuals in the same way as it does White male faculty. It may take women of childbearing age longer to get tenure than single women and men. It may take faculty of color longer to get tenure if they are not nurtured by mentors and do not learn how to establish a successful research agenda within the first few years of their appointments. All of these factors have a direct impact upon the success of diverse faculty in

tenure-track positions. The results of this study indicate that issues of diversity cannot be adequately addressed by hiring practices alone. Lack of academic support and unequal treatment of faculty may lead to the loss of female and faculty of color. The market for diverse scholars is competitive since the pipeline for underrepresented academics has narrowed (Kulis, Chong, & Shaw, 1999). Thus, no institution can afford to ignore issues pertaining to the retention, promotion, and tenure of a diverse faculty.

Clearly, additional research is needed to examine issues of diversity in higher education. Broader surveys from different regions of the country may help in identifying existing and potential means of support for women and faculty of color. For example, one survey respondent reported receiving additional funds to attend research conferences. Such support allows faculty members of color to network with others in their field and encourages collaboration in research. Additionally, conversations about diversity must include the discussion of areas of support that is most critical for diverse faculty to succeed. Resources that could be provided to such faculty include adequate maternity leave policies that take into account the tenure process, supportive family policies and practices, grant writing assistance, editorial assistance, graduate research assistants, and additional funding for technology and travel. While providing greater support and resources do not guarantee that diverse faculty members will succeed at a given institution or in academia, it is a necessary first step. The issues involved in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and the creation of a diverse academic environment are complex. Nevertheless, understanding the issues from the perspectives of those in the trenches may help dreams to be fulfilled rather than deferred.

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Table 1

Diversity Survey Results: Initial Analysis by Race (N = 50)

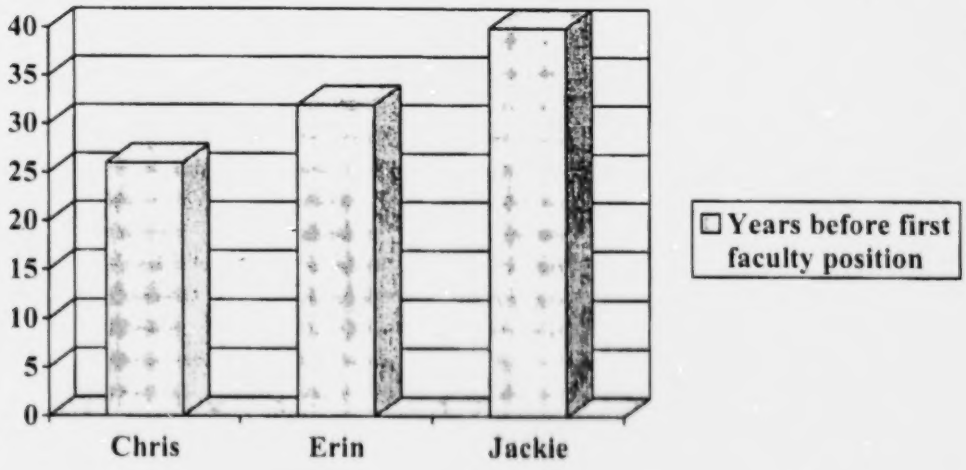
	Blacks	Whites
Family of Origin Size	2.09 (n=23)	1.93 (n=27)
Family of Origin SES	2.67 (n=21)	2.90 (n=24)
Number of Mentors	1.76 (n=21)	2.32 (n=22)
Time from BA to Ed.D./Ph.D.	3.96 (n=23)	4.24 (n=25)

Table 2

Diversity Survey Results: Initial Analysis by Gender (N = 57)

	Female	Male
Family of Origin Size	1.87 (n=31)	2.31 (n=26)
Family of Origin SES	3.07 (n=29)	2.61 (n=23)
Number of Mentors	2.04 (n=28)	2.18 (n=22)
Time from BA to Ed.D/Ph.D.	4.43 (n=30)	3.80 (n=25)

Figure 1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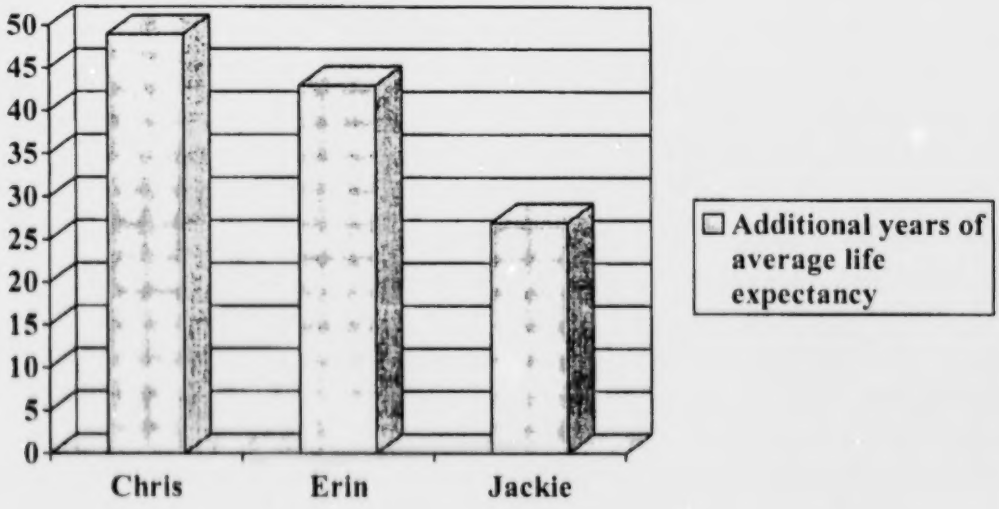
Chris
Erin
Jackie
Years before first faculty position

Figure 2


50
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30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Chris
Erin
Jackie
Additional years of average life expectancy

Appendix A

Faculty Questionnaire

Please complete all items in this questionnaire to the best of your ability.

1. What is your age range?
a. 26-30 b. 31-35 c. 36-40 d. 41-45 e. 46-50+

2. What is your gender?
a. Female b. Male

3. What racial classification do you identify with?
a. African-American b. Asian c. Caucasian d. Hispanic e. Native American f. Other

4. How many people were in your family growing up?
a. 2-4 b. 5-6 c. 6-8 d. 9-10 e. 11+

5. How would you identify your family's economic status growing up?
a. low b. low-average c. average d. average-high e. high

6. What is the length of time between obtaining your BA and doctorate degree?
a. 0-2 years b. 3-5 years c. 6-8 years d. 9-10 years e. 11+ years

7. How would you describe the undergraduate institution you attended?
a. public white b. public minority c. private white d. Historically Black e. International

8. What is your current position in academia? (Circle all that apply)
a. administrator b. full prof. c. assoc. prof. d. asst. prof.

9. How many tenure-track appointments have you had?
a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4 or more

10. Do you have tenure?
a. yes b. no

11. How long did it take you to get tenure?
a. less than 5 years b. 5-6 years c. 7-10 years d. 10 or more years

12. Are you still at the institution where you obtained tenure?
a. yes b. no

13. How many mentors have you had since you matriculated in undergraduate school?
a. 0-1 b. 2-3 c. 4-5 d. 6-7 e. 8 or more

14. How would you describe your institution?
a. Research I b. Research II c. Doctoral d. Masters e. B.A. only

15. How long have you been working in higher education?
a. 0-4 years b. 5-9 years c. 10-15 years d. 16-20 years e. 20+ years

Other comments:

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Signature: Jacqueline Leonard

Printed Name/Position/Title: Jacqueline Leonard, Asst. Prof.

Organization/Address: Temple University
1301 Cecil B. Moore Ave.
Ritter Hall 438
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Telephone: 215-204-8042 FAX: 215-204-1414

E-Mail Address: jleo@temple.edu Date: 7/23/02

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